CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A peer-to-peer file distribution method comprising:

a) a buyer sending to a seller and an arbitrator a request to receive a file possessed by said seller;

b) said seller sending a confirmation of said request to said arbitrator;

c) said arbitrator sending encryption information to said seller;

said seller:

d) encrypting said file with said encryption information;

e) sending said encrypted file to said buyer;

f) creating a first hash from said encrypted file;

g) sending said first hash to said arbitrator;

said buyer:

h) creating a second hash from said encrypted file;

i) sending said second hash to said arbitrator;

if said hashes match, said arbitrator:

j) authorizing payment from said buyer to said seller;

k) sending decryption information to said buyer; and

said buyer decrypting said encrypted file.

2. A method according to claim 1 and further comprising:

in said sending step c) said arbitrator sending watermarking information to said seller;

in said encrypting step d) said seller watermarking said file with said watermarking information;

in said sending step e) said seller sending said encrypted and watermarked file to said buyer;

in said creating step f) said seller creating a first hash from said encrypted and

watermarked file;

in said creating step h) said buyer creating a second hash from said encrypted and watermarked file.

3. A method according to claim 1 wherein any of said sending steps comprises encrypting that which is sent with an encryption key associated with the recipient of that which is sent.

4. A method according to claim 3 and further comprising any of the recipients of that which is sent in any of said sending steps decrypting that which is sent using a decryption key operative to decrypt that which is sent.

5. A method according to claim 1 wherein any of said sending steps comprises signing that which is sent with a signature key associated with the sender of that which is sent.

6. A method according to claim 5 and further comprising any of the recipients of that which is sent in any of said sending steps verifying the signature of that which is sent.

7. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium for peer-to-peer file distribution and comprising:

a code segment operative to send to a seller and an arbitrator a request to receive a file possessed by said seller;

a code segment operative to receive an encrypted file from said seller;

a code segment operative to create a hash from said encrypted file;

a code segment operative to send said hash to an arbitrator;

a code segment operative to receive decryption information sent from said arbitrator if said hash matches a second hash at said arbitrator; and

a code segment operative to decrypt said encrypted file using said decryption information.

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